

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the Acting Secretary  
on NSSM 156, August 1, 1972

ATTENDEES: Joseph J. SISCO; William Cargo,  
Thomas Thornton (S/PC); Holsey  
Handyside (PN/AE); James M. Wilson  
(EA); Leonard Weiss, David Mark,  
Lawrence Finch (INR); Marvin  
Humphreys (EUR); Donovan Q. Zook  
(SCI); David T. Schneider, Dennis  
Kux (NEA/INC).

Sisco summarized the questions posed as follows:

-- Can the Indians explode a device? Yes.

-- Will they? We don't know.

The issue is what can we do to avert this, and there seemed to be a few limited things that were feasible.

Acting Secretary Irwin said that he felt we should do what we could provided it was something sensible. He was impressed that India's becoming a sixth nuclear power would have an impact on the other near-nuclears. While we cannot measure how much impact this would be, it was worthwhile trying to prevent this.

Mr. Sisco agreed, saying he was impressed with the unsettling impact an Indian nuclear blast would have on South Asia as well as the impact on Japan.

Mr. Cargo and Mr. Weiss and others discussed the question of the impact on the Japanese. Cargo thought it would be very grave; Weiss thought it less important.

Mr. Wilson said the Japan Desk agreed with the analysis in the issues paper, namely that it would be important but not decisive.

Regarding major issues (Page 4, Issues Paper):

1. There was agreement regarding the assessment of Indian capabilities, intentions and the implications for other countries.

2. There was much discussion whether our non-proliferation interests were "overriding." The consensus was that these were important but not overriding, especially as our influence was limited.


3. A. It was agreed that we should proceed with efforts to strengthen the position internationally of our view regarding the indistinguishability of PNE's and military explosions. It was also agreed that it would be useful to stimulate a further discussion in India regarding the costs of developing a nuclear weapons and missile delivery system.

On the question of PNE's, it was agreed that such an offer would give us a platform for acting against the Indians if they explode a device, especially if, as seems likely, they would turn down the offer. On the other hand, it was admitted that there were substantial internal USG difficulties with making such

an offer. There was also the question of when to offer the services and what rationale we might provide. The conclusion was that the PNE idea seemed of doubtful value on balance, but was <sup>shd</sup> worth exploring.

B. The session agreed that we should approach the Soviets on the question. Acting Secretary Irwin did not think the two views in the issues paper were necessarily exclusive. He thought we could feel our way, initially discussing the problem with the Soviets and then decide later whether we should urge them to press the Indians in light of their response.

On the question of discussing the issue with China, Wilson said EA found value in our allaying Chinese suspicions that we and the Russians were "up to something" with the Indians. It was also thought useful to point out to the Chinese the negative impact on India of their launching ICBM's over South Asia.



In summary, Acting Secretary Irwin said that we should do those things that seemed reasonable in the pre-decision phase. Mr. Cargo agreed quite

strongly, saying that since we really do not have a good fix on the decision-making calculus on the nuclear question, it was worth our effort to do what we can and try to stimulate action by others.

4. Options After an Indian Decision. Mr. Sisco thought the idea of "sanctions" was too strong. He did not think we can decide before the fact what to do after an Indian explosion. We need to decide this at the time in light of the state of our relations with India and other circumstances then prevailing. He was, therefore reserved about spelling out categorically measures to be taken. In any case, he was doubtful about the US' unilaterally becoming a moral judge, as suggested by the paper. We need to weigh very carefully the impact of what we do on US-Indian relations. Others agreed in general with Sisco; several thought that the third option (essentially a pro-forma response) should not be rejected out of hand, as recommended in the paper.

Acting

/Secretary Irwin said he did not like the options approach for this exercise and instead thought the paper should list a spectrum of possibilities, both in the pre and post decision phase. This would indicate a range of things that could be done. In

the pre-decision phase we could proceed right now,  
while in the post-decision phase we would have to  
decide at the time.

NEA/INC:DKux/emg 8/2/72 X 21289